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RUEH AR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 2374  
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RUEH BY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1770  
RUEH DK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 2125  
RUEH KM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 2550  
RUEH NR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 4978  
RUEA IIA/CIA WASHDC  
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK  
RHMFISS/EUCOM POLAD VAIHINGEN GE  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1643  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 000960

SIPDIS

AF/S FOR B. WALCH  
DRL FOR N. WILETT  
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU  
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS  
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR E. LOKEN AND L. DOBBINS  
STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/23/2018  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [ZI](#)  
SUBJECT: PLANNING FOR FAILURE

REF: A. HARARE 932  
[1](#)B. HARARE 947

Classified By: Ambassador James D. McGee for reason 1.4 (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: While planning for reengagement with a reformist government, the USG should also plan a response to failure of political dialog. Efforts will be needed to force the Mugabe regime to accept internationally supervised elections; regional organizations will be required to show greater resolve than they have in the past. END SUMMARY.

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WHERE WE ARE NOW  
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[1](#)2. (C) Since President Mugabe, Morgan Tsvangirai and Arthur Mutambara signed an agreement to form an "inclusive government" on September 15, both the USG and the international community have focused Zimbabwe policy on three tasks: encouraging the implementation of the agreement in such a way as to provide the MDC a significant share of power; establishing common donor benchmarks and guidelines to determine whether a new government meets the threshold for donor reengagement; and planning for assistance to a new, reformist Zimbabwean government. Our perception that a new government formed under the September 15 agreement will be far from perfect is implicit in this agenda. The decisions we make about reengagement will be critical since the reformers' chances of determining policy will be strengthened or weakened by our actions. Appropriately, this agenda is the principal focus of the meeting in Ottawa on October 30.

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WHAT IF IT FAILS?  
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[1](#)3. (C) Post believes that, important as our current focus is, the USG must also plan for alternative contingencies. The unambiguous failure of the September 15 agreement is one possible scenario which would offer both opportunities and

risks. This could occur in the very short term if negotiations to allocate ministries collapse. It could also come about if, after months of fruitless efforts to advance a reform agenda as part of an "inclusive government," the MDC were to withdraw. Post believes that in the event of such a failure the MDC would call for internationally supervised new elections. (In fact, some within the MDC, and the Botswana government, are already calling for new elections.)

14. (C) The international community's response to such a scenario involves two major challenges. First, it would be necessary to overcome ZANU-PF rejection of internationally supervised elections. Second, the human, financial and material resources required to carry out electoral observation would be significant.

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WAYS TO PRESSURE THE REGIME  
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15. (C) If MDC leaders withdrew from the September 15 agreement, ZANU-PF's preference would be to govern with the participation of co-opted or compromised opposition politicians. (Ref B describes one tactic of the regime's strategy to compromise MDC politicians.) The first order of business for the international community would be to make this alternative impractical. It is notable that since the signing of the September 15 agreement Mugabe has behaved (and been permitted to behave) as if his right to the presidency is unassailable despite the fact that the implementation of

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the agreement is incomplete. If the October 27 Southern African Development Community (SADC) troika meeting does not result in an agreement on allocation of ministries, Post suggests that the USG and like-minded governments begin immediately to press the point publicly and with regional interlocutors that recognition of Mugabe as President of Zimbabwe in the absence of implementation of the September 15 agreement is inappropriate, since all agreed that the June 27 elections were not a valid representation of the will of the Zimbabwean people. With an unambiguous failure of the agreement, we should press SADC and the African Union (AU) to refuse Mugabe standing. While ostracism by the West has become a badge of pride for ZANU-PF, legitimacy in Africa matters to Mugabe. ZANU-PF did not steal the March 29 election through obvious fraud because it knew that such blatant disregard for democracy would have sacrificed legitimacy. Mugabe might again accept a new election as the price of legitimacy.

16. (C) While Mugabe and ZANU-PF might accept an election, they will resist at all costs a degree of international supervision that would prohibit voter intimidation, manipulation and fraud. The following are among measures Post believes we should consider over the medium term to exert pressure on the regime:

--Pressing SADC and the AU to press Mugabe: SADC and AU refusal to recognize the legitimacy of a Mugabe presidency and a ZANU-PF government that did not adhere to the framework of the September 15 agreement would be a critical first step. We should consider what leverage we have over these institutions and whether we are prepared to use it.

--Intensification of bilateral sanctions: With sanctions on parastatals we have begun to move beyond narrowly targeted sanctions toward measures that affect the Zimbabwean economy. If we are serious, we need to include critical institutions, most notably the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe.

--UNSC resolutions and sanctions.

--Elimination of elements of normal relations: We could take such steps as discontinuing routine visa issuance in Harare, stopping support for cultural events, or reducing our

diplomatic presence in Harare.

--Recognition of a government in exile.

--Suspension of humanitarian assistance: Post believes this should not be considered except as a last resort.

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PLANNING FOR INTERNATIONALLY SUPERVISED ELECTIONS  
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¶7. (C) When pressing Mugabe to accept international supervision, we will need to have a clear idea of the minimum requirements for successful elections in Zimbabwe. We will need to reach a consensus with the UN, the African Union and SADC about the roles of regional and international organizations. We will also need to identify resources to support such an effort.

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COMMENT  
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¶8. (C) The continuum of possible scenarios in Zimbabwe includes alternatives to the imperfect but acceptable outcome that would prompt reengagement and complete collapse. An "inclusive government" could muddle along for an extended

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period without completely falling apart or reaching the threshold for renewed international development assistance. The MDC leadership could be co-opted into a status quo policy. Either contingency would require a different policy response.

¶9. (C) In some ways, an unambiguous failure will be the easiest scenario for the U.S., the UK, and other Mugabe regime critics: we will be able to respond with unambiguous condemnation. But such a failure will be the hardest to endure for the people of Zimbabwe. While the Mugabe regime's continuation in power as a rogue state would offend our values, it would condemn millions of Zimbabweans to continued deprivation of basic human rights, hunger and disease. END COMMENT.

MCCEE